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June 5, 2008

To the Austin City Council Members

I manage Care Coordination at Communities In Schools, which is under the Youth and Family Assessment Center contract from Travis County Health and Human Services. We benefit from the **Youth Support Services (Neighborhood Revitalization/Public Services)** portion of the CDBG grant. I'd like to thank you for continuing to include us in your action plan, and to encourage you to continue to do so in the future.

We use the CDBG dollars we receive as *flex funds* to purchase specialized services for children and families in our program, based on their individualized needs. Care Coordination uses a wraparound approach with families, who are referred to us by 12 target AISD schools, located east of IH-35. Children with mental and behavioral health needs are referred to us, and we work with the entire family to provide home-based, family-driven, culturally competent approaches, to wrap the family in supports that are intended to improve the child's overall functioning and the family's overall quality of life.

Recently, I spoke with a parent in our program, whose family has been enrolled with us for the past year. The family will graduate from our program this summer. This single mom of 3 children shared the following about her experience with Care Coordination:

When we started in the program, we (the family) were lost. My kids' dad had just gone to prison, leaving us near homeless, and emotionally distraught. They (the wraparound team of Care Coordinator, family therapist, tutor, etc.) came at the perfect time. My therapist showed my son and me how to make changes for the positive, to move forward, find the right path, and how to see our strengths. My son's tutor was patient, and advocated for my son at the school so that they were able to discover his learning disability and get him the right help. My son's attitude really changed by the end of this school year, from saying, "I can't" to saying "I can." Our therapist guided me in dealing with my kids' difficult behaviors. My son became more responsible. I got more involved with the kids' schools and learned how to be a good leader for the kids. Our Coordinator really respected our culture, beliefs, and background. I now have plans to finish my GED. I know there are more good changes to come. And, one last thing, which was so nice: last Christmas, when I wasn't able to provide a holiday celebration for my family, the program linked us to a sponsor who brought us gifts, food, etc. It was a wonderful surprise.

This parent's comments show one good example of how we are using the CDBG dollars to help families make positive changes. In this case, the child made big improvements – academically and behaviorally – in school, the parent received support during a time of crisis and transition, and the whole family was able to cope and thrive under very stressful circumstances. We serve at least 90 families per year in similar ways with similar results!

Sincerely,

Christine Hanlon, LMSW
Senior Program Coordinator
512-464-9746
chanlon@cisaustin.org

To: Austin City Council

Re: CDBG funding - Youth Support Services
YFAC - CIS Care Coordination

6-2-08

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN. My NAME is RAMIRO MONTOYA. I'm writing you to ASK you to PLEASE HELP THE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT ORG. BECAUSE THEY HAVE BEEN HELPING ME FOR AT LEAST THIS YEAR. AND THEY DESERVE SOME HELP FROM YOU.

I AM THE GAURDIAN AND GREAT GRAND FATHER. OF THE CHILDREN. OF WHICH TWO OF THEM, ARE IN SCHOOL. SO FAR THIS YEAR WE HAVE BEEN HELP WITH MENTORS & PARENT COACHES LIKE MRS. HOPE JAIMES SHE HAS HELPED WITH MY KIDS AND ALSO BROUGHT US FOOD FROM THE FOOD BANK WHICH HAS BEEN VERY HELPFUL.

TIA GLOVER HAS BEEN TUTORING MY OLDEST SHE HAS BEEN HELPING HER WITH HER READING AND MATH. SHE HAS IMPROVED SO MUCH AND THEY ARE PASSING HER TO 3RD GRADE. ALSO SHE HAS TO GO TO SUMMER SCHOOL HOPEFULLY MISS TIA CAN KEEP ON TEACHING HER TO.

TEXAS FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES HAS BEEN HELPING WITH MY GIRLS ON SATURDAYS. BY TAKING THEM SWIMMING, BOWLING AND OTHER PLACE. THANKS CHERYL DOTY (COVER)

KELLY SMITH HAS BEEN MOST HELPFUL
IN GETTING OUR LIVES TOGETHER. HER AND ADEN
HAVE GOTTEN MY GIRLS TO BEHAVED A LOT BETTER
LISTEN TO ME AND MY WIFE, WE WERE HAVING
A LOT OF TROUBLE WITH THEM BEFORE. SHE IS
ALSO TRYING TO HELP ME AMEND MY FINAL
DECREE OF CONSERVATORSHIP. I HAVE BEEN
HAVING A LOT OF PROBLEMS, WITH THE GIRLS
MOTHER. BUT THANKS TO MISS KELLY SMITH
AND ALL HER HELPERS. I THANK ^{WE} WILL MAKE IT
WORK.

THANK YOU LISTENING TO THIS
LETTER. HOPE IT WILL HELP YOU
WITH HELPING YOUTH DEVELOPMENT.

THANKS

Ramiro Montoya